

approved

Senior tax credit task force

Minutes of the February 6, 2007, meeting

The Senior Tax Credit Task Force met on February 6, 2007, in the Tyson Room, Howard Building, 3430 Courthouse Dr., Ellicott City, MD, at 2 pm.

The following members of the task force were in attendance: Ted Meyerson, Colin Burke, Don Dunn, Frank Chase, Janice Bloodworth, Joel Yesley, Pat Dornan, Sara Hamer, Sherman Howell, Susan Buswell, Peter Rogers, Sue Brown, Ron Weinstein, Sharon Greisz, and Curt Curtis.

Others from staff in attendance were Jeff Bronow, Leo Oken, Jeff Meyers, Donald Stitely, Ali Shirazie, Terri Hansen, and Diana Coll.

The meeting was open to the public and press.

Chairman Meyerson called the meeting to order at 2 p.m.

The minutes from February 1 were approved unanimously.

The task force decided to meet next on February 15 to discuss a draft written report.

The chairman announced that several bills had been introduced in the General Assembly that the task force should track: SB 319, HB 9, and HB 436.

The task force adopted the following recommendations:

1. The current bill should be repealed. A new bill for seniors 70 and older should be enacted that incorporates recommendations 2 through 8 below.
2. The income test should be set at 400% of the most recent federal poverty level for a household of 2.
3. The credit should be a percentage of the County property tax for the year in which the credit is sought.
4. The credit should be 25%.
5. The credit provided by this bill should be applied after the Homestead Tax Credit is applied and should make up any difference between (a) the sum of all other property tax credits available to that taxpayer and (b) the amount that this credit would be if there were no other credits.
6. The exclusion of "substantial improvements" should be retained.
7. There should be an asset test that should be the same as the asset test under the State Homeowners' Property Tax credit.
8. All taxpayers should be made aware of all available credit programs by including information with all County tax bills. The Council, by Resolution, should ask that

persons who prepare tax returns should make their clients aware of available tax credits. The Council, by Resolution, should ask the County Executive to instruct the Department of Citizens Services and the Office on Aging to develop an outreach program to educate citizens about available property tax credits.

Some members of the task force felt that its recommendations might be accomplished without creating a new program by improving the County supplement to the Homeowners' Tax Credit. Multiple programs are confusing, particularly to seniors.

The task force applauded Mr. Burke's statement that the chairman has done a wonderful job and should be thanked for doing so.

The task force adjourned at 3:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeff Meyers